

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

MAXIMUM CARRYING POTENTIAL OF A  
BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *ELANUS CAERULEUS*

A.D. Forbes-Watson

On 5 April 1966, when travelling along the road near Karen, Nairobi, 1700 m a.s.l., I saw a Black-shouldered Kite struck and killed by a car. It is preserved in the National Museum in Nairobi (male, No.20029).

Before being killed it had just taken off from flat grassland c.60 m from the road, and was evidently trying very hard to gain altitude but was apparently unable to do so. When struck it had been in level flight at c.4.5 m for some time, and I feel sure that it could fly no higher. The bird was carrying a dead rodent, subsequently identified by A. Duff-MacKay, National Museum, Nairobi as a female Swamp Rat *Otomys ?thomasi*. The rat's weight of 154 g was evidently hindering the predator, whose weight was 220 g; the bird was 'fairly fat'. Part of the rat had been eaten and was subsequently removed from the kite's stomach - these remains weighed c.10 g, so the bird was carrying at least 164 g or c.80 per cent. of its 210 g. In view of the bird's inability to do more than sustain level flight, it seems likely that this represents the maximum weight it could carry, and is worth recording because of the lack of reliable records of bird of prey carrying power.

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FIRST RECORD OF  
ELEONORA'S FALCON *FALCO ELEONORAE* IN KENYA

Clive F. Mann

Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) could find no definite records of this species for Kenya, and none had come to light by the time the MS of Mann (1976) had been submitted for publication. There are, however, records from Tanzania in the first mentioned paper.

This very scarce and restricted species breeds in the Mediterranean and on the northwest coast of Africa. The majority of the birds apparently migrate to Somalia, Madagascar and Réunion (Vaurie 1965). The Somali records refer to the northern part of the country where it is probably only a passage migrant. It is also recorded from Eritrea (Urban & Brown 1971).

In a recent conversation with Mr G. Evans of Llanelli, Wales, I discovered that Summers (1974) mentioned an injured bird that was given him by the late L.S.B. Leakey. The bird recovered and was trained to the fist, taken eventually to Britain, and was last seen heading out over the English Channel. I wrote to Mr Summers who very kindly and promptly provided me with the following information: the bird, an adult female, was found near Karen, Nairobi, in November (?12th) 1951. Its identity was subsequently confirmed by Derek Goodwin at the British Museum. Mr Summers told me that a few months after receiving this bird he was flying it near a flock of migratory falcons at Eldoret, when another Eleonora's Falcon appeared and mobbed his own.